



Photo: Gregory Drezdson, 1995

Albert Belle

**Barrier Breakers!**  
CLEVELAND  
**Indians**  
AMERICAN LEAGUE  
**Champions '95**



**L**arry Doby ushered in a new era of Indians baseball when he became the first African-American player in team history on July 5, 1947. In 1952, Doby became the first African-American to lead either the American or National League in home runs. In 1995, Albert Belle became only the second African-American in Indians history to bring the home run crown back to Cleveland. Like Doby, Belle also made history, becoming the first player ever with 50 or more home runs and doubles in the same season. In between these two accomplishments, many African-American baseball stars have made history in a Cleveland Indians uniform.

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**July 5, 1947:** Larry Doby makes his Cleveland Indians debut. Making the jump from the Newark Eagles of the Negro Leagues, Doby strikes out as a pinch-hitter against the White Sox. Subsequently, Doby becomes one of the most prolific sluggers in Tribe history.

**July 15, 1948:** Satchel Paige becomes the first African-American pitcher to win a game in modern Major League Baseball history, beating Philadelphia in the second game of a doubleheader. The future Hall of Famer and Negro Leagues veteran went 6-1 as a 42-year-old rookie in 1948, helping the Indians win the American League pennant and World Championship.

**June 23, 1950:** Luke Easter hits the longest home run at Cleveland Municipal Stadium, 477 feet into section four in the upper deck in right field. Cleveland beat Washington 13-4. Easter, a long-time standout in the Negro Leagues, hit 93 home runs in 491 games with the Tribe.

**April 30, 1952:** Quincy Troupe becomes the first African-American catcher in Indians history as the Tribe drops a 3-1 decision to Philadelphia. Troupe led the Cleveland Buckeyes to the Negro Leagues Championship in 1945. He played just six games with the Indians.

**August 14, 1958:** Vic Power ties a Major League record with two steals of home in one game. His second home plate theft gave the Indians a 10-9, 10-inning victory against the Tigers.

**August 24, 1958:** Rookie Jim "Mudcat" Grant wins his tenth game of the season, a 9-1 victory at Washington. Grant is the first African-American pitcher to win 10 games with the Indians. Over seven seasons, Grant won 67 games and led the team with 15 in 1961.

**April 8, 1975:** Frank Robinson officially becomes the first African-American manager in modern Major League history as the Indians open the 1975 campaign against New York. In his first at-bat, Robinson homers off Doc Medich (a moment later voted most memorable in franchise history). Cleveland defeats the Yankees 5-3.

**September 30, 1984:** Andre Thornton completes the first "Silver Slugger" Award season in Indians history. Cleveland's designated hitter batted .271 with 33 home runs and 99 RBI. Thornton concluded his career among Cleveland's all-time leaders in home runs (214) and RBI (749).

**September 16, 1987:** Joe Carter becomes the first 30 home run—30 stolen base player in Indians history by swiping his 30th base of the season in a 5-3 loss to Seattle. Carter ranks among Cleveland's all-time leaders with 151 home runs.

**October 3, 1993:** Kenny Lofton completes his second full Major League season with a club record 70 stolen bases. Lofton should become Cleveland's all-time stolen base leader in 1996.

**September 30, 1995:** Albert Belle becomes the first player in Major League history with 50 or more home runs and doubles in the same season with a sixth inning home run off Melvin Bunch as the Indians beat the Royals 3-2. Belle will likely become Cleveland's all-time leading home run hitter in 1996.

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**ABOUT SABR:** The Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) and its Negro Leagues Committee both celebrate their 25th anniversary in 1996. SABR is an association of individuals who read about, write about, talk about, learn about, and share information about baseball.

The Negro Leagues Committee and its members have uncovered and disseminated vast amounts of information about African-American players who preceded Jackie Robinson and Larry Doby. SABR sponsors 17 research committees, regional chapters, a national convention, and publishes Baseball Research Journal, The National Pastime, The SABR Bulletin, and special issues on specific topics such as The Negro Leagues Book, SABR's largest publication (382 pages). SABR membership is open to anyone interested in baseball. For more information, write to SABR, P.O. Box 93183, Cleveland, OH 44101 or call (216) 575-0500.

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**THE CLEVELAND PLAN:** The Cleveland Indians and SABR have teamed up to develop the Cleveland Plan, an ongoing series of events and research encompassing the rich history of Negro, Hispanic, and Women players and leagues. In 1992 the Indians began to collect text, photos and memorabilia which recognize and salute the significant contributions of African-Americans to the game of baseball. This Barrier Breakers poster, the fourth in a series, is an outgrowth of that ongoing effort to bring about a greater understanding and awareness of Cleveland's rich Negro Leagues history and the impact of today's African-American players. For more information on the Cleveland Plan and other Indians Community Relations programs, call the Indians at (216) 420-4400.